



# VISION MAGAZINE

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2022-2023



# THE VISION.



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# THE VISION.



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## Mitch

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## Confused

When I was three feet tall, I'd put on my father's heavy prescription and walk around the house.  
Climbing the hills and valleys as they formed on the hardwood floor.  
I'd imagine I was on the moon. My parents begged me to stop, warning it'd worsen my vision.  
But I think it was because it was always 4am.

I used to throw my head back on the swings and let  
Gravity confuse me  
Oh, the joy of being disoriented  
Spinning and twirling  
Flying and falling

I once dreamt I blipped out of my bed two feet to the left and fell  
Down the side of the building and  
Oh, how that dream excited me

We are all sitting on this spinning rock among the stars  
Inherently we are heavenly  
And I feel closest to the magic I was spawned from with my head tipped back  
And my vision blurred by wicked movement

And so again, I must find my father's heavy prescription  
And walk on the moon





Lourdes Hernandez



# Sleepy Summer

*Lourdes Hernandez*

I will not know the last time I will sit under a willow tree.  
I hope the sky will be lazy with dusk on a stagnant summer's eve.

## When was I last there?

Pulling up the grass as my bum soaks up last night's rain.  
There are no cars, but I can hear

and Faint buzzing from the nearest television,  
Wind chimes that clink, dazed.

All the hair on my shoulders feel warm.  
No reason to think of anything but the way it is right now.

My friend is talking. We are talking. In the grass, under the willow tree. I think, she is beautiful. How many days did I spend with her? Just that way? Not enough.

When it finally gets dark, I listen to crickets and the whirring of the fan in my home. Humidity hugs me tighter now. I wish it would let me go, yet it is still so comfortable. Not unlike the way my mother loves me.

I do miss it. The humidity, the wet grass, my beautiful friend. I spent nearly every day outside. Where did it all go?

Did it run away with the wind? All hot and sticky.

School will come soon and all I will think of is boys and math.

Things were never the same. We moved to the other side of town. The other side of the world. Away from the apartments and my beautiful friend and the willow tree.

This new grass, this new summer, was not the same. The grass was woody and tall. The sounds did not buzz or clink. There were no beautiful friends.

This new summer, I would sit in this new grass and let the sun wash me. Let it sing to me. A small boy played next door, his laughter was constant.

I loved this new roar when the wind flew through the trees. There were so many more here, and so much closer too. But no willow tree.

I was too afraid to sit against it. To lean on her back and write a song under her wings.  
How fast time flies when you're afraid.





Student Showcase

# David House

*Lourdes Hernandez*

First-year David House is a Boston native from Dorchester. He attended Boston Latin School and Boston Art Academy. His father, David Sr. also attended MassArt. Familiar with these halls, House sees this institution and its resources as something to respect and make use of. As House puts it, "If you don't take advantage of that, you're a fool".

House sees the benefit of adventuring in new directions and respecting the artist spirit by practicing every day. Inspired by Modern and Postmodern art, it seems like House is a voice seeking subject.

**David celebrates roughness, and all it has to offer, while embracing vulnerability and prioritizing discovery**

His paintings are definitely experimental in nature. They often highlight the human form, or more







specifically, the boundaries of the human form. How twisted can a leg be until it is no longer a leg? Can negative space define an object just as well as, if not more than, a drawing of an object? His work includes self portraits and figures, experiments with color theory, and dabbles in mixed media and screen printing with a persistent theme of rugged self discovery.

David celebrates roughness, and all it has to offer, while embracing vulnerability and prioritizing discovery. David likes to work in a combination of mediums. Often working with ink, acrylic, and collage, but experimenting with cardboard or raw canvas. House expresses an interest in painting on sculptures, and even garbage. He is here to pursue sculpture and is excited to learn welding, pouring concrete, woodworking, and other large scale sculpture techniques. There is a great air about him of community, and openness. House notes that he wouldn't be where he is today without the community he's connected with since coming to Mass Art. David, along with Nate, Solon, Mike, Freddy, and Kenny started the Garment Printing Club here at

MassArt. During our conversation, David makes sure to highlight his crew and mention how important their support and camaraderie has been to his growth this year. As a budding first-year we're all excited to see what he will do.

## Student Showcase

# Leah Verrilli

*Sophia Dedek*

From doll-like figures to gruesome gore, Leah Verrilli is a sophomore fashion student who uses haunting imagery and intricate detail to create dream-like paintings that reflect a side to femininity that is often hard to capture through art. Balancing light and dark both literally and thematically, Verrilli exposes multiple sides of her feminine identity and shows that darker themes are not reserved for the masculine.

Her artistic style is everything from a doll-collector's dreams and nightmares. The characters in her works exist in an imagined feminine dream world, and can be seen interacting with fairies and unicorns while ripping their own guts out. Her figures are all very organic and delicate, with large eyes, small mouths, and flowing bodies. She contrasts bright whites, pinks, and purples with deep blues, blood reds, and dark black.

I find myself so immersed in her art because of how detailed each individual piece is. The thin linework and the sparkly white detailing makes me look closer and invites me into the invented world she portrays. I particularly like the work *Wintertime Bloodflowers* that encompasses the harmony between the fantasy themes and the gruesome imagery by showing a fairy-like figure surrounded by bright white robes and flowers that have blood-red centers with splattered detailing in the background. I don't want say these two themes are juxtaposing each other because they are balanced so well. Instead of contrasting each other, she allows the darker aspects of this work to be just as delicate and feminine as the lighter themes.

Her work is provocative, because it twists and mangles femininity while also celebrating it. Living as a woman in the world can be both beautiful and gruesome, and her art both celebrates that and acknowledges that with a more somber tone.

I am very happy to have had the opportunity to talk with her about her process.

### What inspires your Art?

I like going on Pinterest or looking at art books for people who make very whimsical—very fairy



tale-esque drawings. Pictures of women and doll artists and fashion. Not just limited to drawings. I also like darker elements, like blood,” Verrilli says, laughing. “I wanna put more gore into my work, but right now my thesis is to create things that are sparkly and feminine. When I was 10 or 11 I discovered this Japanese artist, Minori, and she transforms Japanese shironuri makeup into this ethereal spirit. She makes her own clothes and looks like a fairy. She inspires me a lot.

**Can you pinpoint a moment in your life that initially drew you to feminine things and images?**

I think that's just always what I've gravitated



towards. My aesthetic has changed a lot over time. I used to draw things that were more cute, but now I draw things that are more beautiful. Sometimes my work has a personal meaning to it, or to reflect on emotions that I'm having. I think some of my best pieces have come from when I was in a dark place, or thinking very heavily about a certain topic.

**What specific mediums do you prefer to use? I notice a lot of your work is drawing and—what I assume—is watercolor?**



Yeah, I do a lot of watercolor. My favorite medium, I would say, is probably colored pencil and watercolor. I like to combine media; I can't just stick to one. Usually two or three for each piece. I get carried away sometimes but I like the way it looks. My process is very mindless but mindful.

**Is there a specific piece that you can pick out that you particularly remember making?**

Well, I think that the piece that I remember making the most was probably a piece that I called—It's titled, Wintertime Bloodflowers. This piece is significant to me—I don't know why, but I remember that the time period I was making this was very significant. I remember making it as a crutch during winter break because I remember winter break was very tough for me. It was a really hard time for me, and making this painting really allowed me to immerse myself into this piece and it came out really beautiful.

**You say your art changed a lot as you grew, do you see that happening now even more?**

Oh, totally. I feel like I'm always doing something different but sticking to the same core aesthetic in the end.

**Explain the philosophy – if you have one – of your work. The meaning behind it.**

I feel this a lot but my art is kind of like an outlet for me to explore this enchantment, or fantasy world. Or, like, a way for me to kind of make something that is magical, or from another world. Usually my pieces are very small so it tempts the viewer to look closer and be immersed in it and go up to it. Giant paintings have immersive qualities to them, but my work is like this little fairy world that you're beckoned into coming in and taking a look. I've had people tell me this, it's very immersive and they have a very entrancing quality about them, I guess. My work is meant to make people feel entranced by the ethereal quality. I do







want to start thinking of different ways of approaching that; maybe making something that is a bit more thought-provoking. Maybe by incorporating more elements of blood. There was this one piece I made—it's very important to me—of this woman, and if you look closely at it she is holding her uterus in her hand and she has a cut on her lower stomach. And, even though it has this ethereal trance like quality to it—this beauty—it's also morbid.

**What do these themes of femininity and morbidity mean to you?**

I really love that duality. I feel like I'm a person of duality, I'm not just one thing. Not two sides, but you ARE both sides. Not just willing to do one thing but do multiple things. I also love horror movies—

I loved Pearl, it was so good—and the music I listen to. I recently started listening to more metal and rock music and I really became infatuated with Chelsey Wolf's music. So I think that the music I listen to has really shifted that message. I wasn't really making work with darker themes until I started listening to Chelsey. Everything for me is very feminine, there is never really any masculine

world. I feel like as a lesbian I need to create this idyllic place of femininity and womanhood but in its own way. Sometimes there's messages of the patriarchy, but this world is completely free of men—also because I hate drawing men [laughs] I do like stereotypically feminine things, but it's my art and I make it my own.

**Is there anything within your time here at MassArt that has influenced your art at all?**

I feel like there was a shift in my art when I came to MassArt. My aesthetic became more cosmic, ethereal but more dark, especially with the colors. My friend Urchin: meeting them was really crazy to me because they have a very similar thesis to me. They also draw a lot of figures of people, and I really admire the way they draw."

**Anything else you want to say? Any plans for future projects?**

I recently got a few copies of the beautiful bizarre magazine. I discovered so many artists through that magazine. I love having a physical book to look through. I'm gonna make a piece with a girl and a dragon, maybe in a watercolor kind of way. Very magical and ethereal, and I want to try and incorporate blood. I love textures, I love blood.



# Embracing the Art of Complaining

*by Ari Bowman*





# I AM A COMPLAINER.

For a project in my Time class recently, I documented the amount of times I complained, where I complained, and what my complaint was, over the course of roughly two weeks – one initial week with sample data, and a second week with final data. I did not anticipate just how much I would learn about myself and complaining in this span of two weeks.

**The Oxford Dictionary's definition for the word complaint is, "a statement that a situation is unsatisfactory or unacceptable."**

In some ways complaining might be coded into my genetics – both of my grandmothers are complainers too. I inherited my grandmother's love for painting, and her sighs. We both sigh while we're painting. Neither of us realize when we're doing it. My other grandmother is a walking ball of complaints. The tea is always too hot; if not too hot, too cold. The cup is too big, or maybe it's too small. It's never just right. Nothing ever is.

Complaining a lot comes with people telling me that complaining is bad; that I should stop complaining, and be more positive. Be polite, I'm told. Don't be rude, bite your tongue.

Of course, there are absolutely times where complaining borders and often crosses over into the territory of being outright rude or offensive. However, we all might be a bit better off, if we all complained a little bit more.

Hear me out. The Oxford Dictionary's definition for the word complaint is, "a statement that a situation is unsatisfactory or unacceptable." How many things in life are unsatisfactory or unacceptable? An endless number of things – we live in late-stage capitalism, people, there will never be a shortage of things to complain about. And we should complain about them! How else are we ever supposed to advance and achieve true justice if we can't even point out when things are unjust?

Even on a small-scale level, it's normal and

healthy to want to express your own personal frustrations about things going on in your life at the moment. Hell, when I collected my data, a good chunk of my complaints were about my back hurting.

A lot of anti-complaining sentiment, at least in the US, is probably due to how the ideas of working hard despite pain and discomfort, pulling oneself up "by their bootstraps," et cetera, are embedded within American culture to some extent.

Some workplaces even instate "no complaining policies," intended to help create a more positive work environment. Even while well-intentioned, this worries me. This such company, Buffer, separates the ideas of "speaking up" and "complaining," saying the former is in service of change and the latter is in service of ego; one is good-intentioned, the other is not. However, this attempt at trying to reframe the definition of complaining is misguided.

**A lot of anti-complaining sentiment, at least in the US, is probably due to how the ideas of working hard despite pain and discomfort [...] are embedded within American culture**

Complaining is stating that you are unhappy about something related to your current situation; that's about it. It doesn't necessarily entail any sort of snark, rudeness, or audacity. While it can contain those things, there are many ways to complain that are simply just stating the facts of life. When I complain about how MassArt doesn't have a written excused absence policy, and think it's ridiculous that a professor could theoretically fail me for missing two classes, I don't think it's to serve my ego. It's to serve myself and other students. But it's still complaining nonetheless.

Complaining is kind of hard to do properly, I'll admit. Ruminating over things I can't change is something I do often. However, breaking out of that cycle and using your complaints to make change is something everyone has to do. To complain is to change, is to grow. And to do all that is to master the art of complaining.

# Why We Read Stories About Vampires

*by Heline Gokcen*

Bela Lugosi, an actor famous for portraying one of pop culture's most iconic vampires, Count Dracula, died in 1956 at the age of 73 of a heart attack in his sleep after having been sick for some time. His wife told the press: "He was terrified of death. Towards the end he was very weary, but he was still afraid of death. Three nights before he died he was sitting on the edge of the bed. I asked him if he were still afraid to die. He told me that he was. I did my best to comfort him, but you might as well save your breath with people like that. They're still going to be afraid of death." It strikes me as being tragically ironic that a man so famous for portraying an immortal creature was scared of death up till the very last moment. We may think that as we become older we become more at peace with death, that life loses its luster and we prepare to shake this mortal coil. I had a great aunt who lived to be 111 years old; she was fervently religious and read the Quran every day. On her deathbed, I was told that despite this she was still beyond terrified to die. Isn't that just so frightening? Death is horrifying but we push it out of our minds to deal with later like a final research paper assigned early in the semester. But the idea that you can have a successful career, live a long happy life, even be comforted by a belief in the afterlife, and still not know how you will truly react when confronted with death? It shakes me.

I'm brought back to the image of Bela Lugosi. Those old movie posters of The Count with stark stage lights under his romantic features, illuminating the lines that cut deep into his face. I read that anecdote from his wife and I am filled with a sick sense of pity. I see a premonition of my own future. I, too, fear the reaper. Yet I am continually brought back to that image of The Vampire. It feels emblematic of a paradox in our culture. We are not only hopelessly scared of death, but we live in a deep denial of it. When someone dies we are quick to take the body out of sight. To put a sheet over them or to close their eyes as if to pretend the deceased are only asleep. We embalm and preserve our loved ones, painting their faces so they don't look like a pale corpse. We insist on saying "passed away" instead of "died." Yet despite all this, humanity has a grim fascination with death.

Through history people have gathered to watch gladiators fight to the death, public hangings, and witch burnings. A part of us remains curious about the morbid details of a true crime murder case or the technical aspects of medieval torture. We fear death, yet we are obsessed with it. Here enters: The Vampire. It takes something we are so profoundly afraid of and dresses it up in a little costume, complete with fangs and a shiny black cape.

This explains why vampires surpass many other folklore monsters and continue to spark our imaginations. They offer another answer to our species' existential crisis. If the belief in the afterlife is not enough to bring comfort, then what alternative can we create? What if you could survive until the heat death of the universe? To be evil, yet never see heaven or hell. To never grow old and weak. Wouldn't you love to have it all? It's all very seductive. It serves as a wonderful fantasy to escape into. Death is scary. That's why we use vampire stories as a way to quell those fears, at least for a moment. Anne Rice, author of *Interview with The Vampire* and *The Vampire Chronicles* based many of her vampire characters' turmoil about life, death, and religion around her own experiences. Basing a scene wherein the protagonist, Lestat, has a sudden revelation and takes in the weight of the knowledge that everyone, including himself, was going to die. Rice wrote; "I realized that we might not even know, when we died, what this [world] was all about- which is exactly Lestat's experience. I was a basket case for six months. I could hardly function. I never felt the same about life or death." Except in the book Lestat never dies. He becomes a vampire.

As for Bela Lugosi, he was buried in his Dracula costume. There are pictures of him lying peacefully at his open casket funeral, as if the Count settled down to sleep. They beautifully freeze him forever in time as his character. In some poetic way he achieves immortality in our minds and in pop culture, and so does the Vampire. As long as we continue to fear death we will continue to tell those stories. To look for consolation for our very human anxieties in the inhuman.



# Where Are All the Female Werewolves?

by Heline Gokcen

Of the majority of pop culture images and stories of werewolves, there seem to be so few stories about the women. Women who, after an agonizing transformation every full moon, turn into ravenous, drooling, untamed beasts. The werewolf has been used as a metaphor for many things such as the fear of carnal desires, of one's own sexuality, of age, of one's own body; the idea that your anxieties and all that you repress will be set off its leash. One exception to this trend is the cult classic *Ginger Snaps*, a film which utilizes these themes well to tell a werewolf story centered around teenage girls. Though it still stands in mainstream media, women are not what comes to mind first when the image of the werewolf arises. It's a shame there is such a lack of stories taking advantage of this iconic monster to use as a vessel to tell stories about the anxieties of being human, ostracization from society and how that pertains to womanhood and queerness.

People often say that masculinity is a prison, but what could be a more restricting cage than beauty? In so much of media, today and throughout pop cultural history, women must be pretty first and people second. We see examples of this everywhere. In the women of zombie apocalypse stories and their pristinely waxed armpits. In artist portrayals of She Hulk depicting her with little muscle mass, as if she were just a supermodel but green. One particularly telling example comes from Rick Berman, the producer of *Deep Space Nine*, a show which covers many of its male cast members faces completely with prosthetic alien makeup and leaves the female aliens with the absolute bare minimum of matching prosthesis to signify they aren't human. Berman reportedly instructed the effects team of the show to not put much prosthetic makeup on the actresses who portrayed female aliens. Most revealing, he is quoted as saying in regards to actress Terry Farrell: "We don't want to cover up her pretty face."

Time and time again, women in media are made to be ogled at and consumed; male authors, producers, and network execs are extremely hesitant to make them unfuckable. Bjork put it perfectly: "Men: They can be silly, fat, funny, intelligent, hard-core, sensual, philosophical, [...] But with

women they always have to be feminine, feminine, feminine."

Why can't women be grotesque monsters? Why aren't they given the freedom to be ugly? The distinct lack of women in the broad werewolf genre implies that there is a curse worse than lycanthropy. Something so unfathomable and shocking that it can't be shown in movies, shows, and books: a woman who is huge, hairy and muscled. Is this society's greatest horror? The gender non-conforming?

# Horror in the Age of Now

by *Urchin Downing*

We live in an age where everyone's a critic, everyone's got an opinion, and the internet allows us to share these opinions and start a dialogue. While institutions of film seem insistent to reject the idea that horror as a movie genre is worthy of widespread praise, it's been left to the people to discuss these movies, to celebrate them and what they offer to film as an art form. Though 2022 was a particularly critically acclaimed year for horror; and I agree with the critics, we haven't had such a good year for the genre in a while. So what made last year so special? And much more specifically, how is the recent lo-fi art house horror experience in *Skinamarink*, emblematic of this?

Every decade in horror feels like a new experience for the genre. 2000s movies like *Saw* and *The Ring* differ greatly from the 90s' *Scream* and *Bride of Chucky*. When we look at the horror movies that came out in the latter half of the 2010s, directors like Ari Aster and Jordan Peele dominated the market with movies such as *Hereditary* and *Us*. The common theme that I found in movies that came out around the latter half of the decade is an overarching commentary that exists outside the movie. *Us* comments on the American class system, and *Hereditary* speaks upon familial loss and grief. The horror genre has always been used as a politically and socially communicative medium, but this current era of horror seems to offer more overt messaging than was expressed in films that have come before. When looking at the horror movies that have come out in the current decade I think that observation carries over. Last year's *Barbarian* is an excellent example of this, speaking upon sexism and what it's like to navigate the world as a woman. One thing that does differentiate the recent decades of horror is how they use color. The movies that came out in the 2010s have an overall sense of realism within their color grading, with nothing too saturated or bright. Movies such as 2015's *The Itch* and even 2010's *Insidious* come to mind. While with films like 2021's *Last Night in Soho*, and even 2022's *Pearl*, we see bright color and heavy saturation play a key role in the storytelling of these

movies. All this is to say, this decade of horror movies seem to put concept and color to the forefront of their storytelling, and there's already a solid base in this compelling new era of horror to show us what we can look forward to in the future.

The lo-fi monotonous yet horrifying feature, *Skinamarink* stands out to me as a movie that summarizes the trends of horror of the past decade while providing something fresh to the horror genre. While the indie film originally came out in 2022, it saw a theatrical release in the U.S. in early 2023. *Skinamarink* fits the bill of stylistic trends in horror of the 2020s. A lot of the movie takes place in the dark, much of the film emphasizes the color that comes from the movie's limited light source. The movie is also very cool toned which allows for the movie's shot-by-shot style of filming to not only keep a viewer on the edge of their seat but also admire these specific shots from the movie. The main characters of *Skinamarink* are not often shown to us in full. The main character is a little boy named Kevin and his sister Kaylee. Having the main characters be children allows director Kyle Edward Ball to play with things such as the height of the camera, the sound of a child running on the carpet, and the lack of knowledge of the world around you creating a sense of dissonance. There is a persistent expectation of action that creates a scary and tense watch-through. While some may find that boring, I think in an age where big screen horror relies on jumpscare and grotesque imagery, *Skinamarink* plays with the knots in our stomachs, waiting in anticipation for a satisfying scare to surprise us out of nowhere.

In terms of the movie's meaning, it's very open ended, and Ball doesn't give a direct answer. People speculate that it's about familial trauma which, while fitting and likely, never while watching it did I feel like an underlying message was trying to permeate my experience. I didn't feel I needed to understand some greater picture as a requirement to enjoy the film. The vagueness of the plot allows the viewer to draw their own conclusions, which makes the movie compelling as you have to put the pieces of





Illustration Kyle Downing

this movie together. *Skinamarink* received widely mixed reviews, which is understandable. I watched this movie in a theater setting, which I personally think is the best way to view the film. It demands your full attention and a sense of space for the movie to fill. I don't feel it's a movie you can just throw on a computer and get the full experience, though this is a point of contention among fans. (Many fans do believe that sitting alone in the dark, deep under the covers, laptop uncomfortably close to your face, is the perfect environment to comprehensively experience *Skinamarink*.) So while I understand why the film has received its share of negative reviews, I think it's fair to acknowledge a lack of willingness from audiences to meet the movie where it's at. It's truly less of a movie and more of an art piece, something that asks for your full attention. In the grand scheme of the horror genre, it's possible we might not remember *Skinamarink* in years to come. However, I think the movie does a lot of things that are new for the genre that should not be ignored. From its color grading, cinematography, and sound design, *Skinamarink* offers a lot to a genre that strives for reinvention and expansion.

Looking at the current lineup for this year of horror filmography, everything that's been released and all that's to come, it's hard to guess whether we'll come close to reaching just how ripe with good horror movies last year was. I hope that horror continues down the stylistic sensibilities we saw in a lot of the movies from 2022, but overall, I feel a need to highlight the importance of the fun that comes with horror! It's no secret that horror films do not get a lot of attention from the academy awards. The phrase "elevated horror" has been thrown around a lot, though I feel that this term almost spits in the face of the range of sophistication, complexity, and camp of older horror movies. In turn, there have been many movies that come out that almost try too hard to be high-brow and deep, and fail miserably (director Alex Garland's *Men* comes to mind). All in all, horror is a genre that I think should always indulge itself in experimentation, embracing work from big directors like Ari Aster and new up-and-comers like Kyle Ball alike. Horror should never set harsh boundaries, it's a genre that uniquely allows for personal flair and experimentation, and I hope that never ends.



# COF Does Shakespeare: A Rockin' Review

*by Sophia Dedek*

The story follows two sets of young, star-crossed lovers: Lysander (Aidan Gardner) & Hermia (Amanda McCluskey), and Demetrius (Tony Mora) & Helena (Sakshi Nandan). Hermia's father wants her to marry Demetrius and is furious that instead, she is in love with Lysander. Demetrius, however, has his heart set on marrying Hermia and actively rejects the affections of Hermia's friend Helena, who is madly in love with him. Add in a bit of fairy magic and love spells, and hijinks ensue, bringing you Shakespeare's most famous comedy!

I really enjoyed the energy everyone brought to their performances. Without the effort put into wild movements, silly voices, and dramatic expressions, the comedy in this comedy might not have stuck. However, everyone gave it their all, and the response from the audience was rousing applause after every scene. The first hint to what we would be getting ourselves into (the vibe, if you will) occurred immediately after the first song finished; a chorus of the opening to *Hooked on a Feeling* was chanted from every side of the auditorium. Wasting no time, the show started and we were thrown into the excitement. Though you may recognize the core play from your high school English class, the classic songs and fun choreography make this show go from stale to stunning. The lighting as well as the addition of a live band also made for such an engaging show, and made the production even more lively! And the set crew didn't miss a single mark during scene transitions. There was even a moment where I turned my head away for a second, and was surprised to see that when I looked back, the scene had completely changed!

Besame Mucho was a particularly fun scene where the timid and frustrated Helena begs for her apathetic love interest Demetrius to return her fruitless affection. This awkward dance sees Demetrius literally dodging Helena's advances with ease as he is chased across the stage in a flurry of twists and twirls. Tony and Sakshi brought their all into the performances. Helena brought the heat and hit every note, and while Demetrius didn't have a singing part in this number, his dynamic facial expressions told the whole story.

The Fairy King, Oberon (Rob Fontenelli) and Queen Titania (Amelia Austen) then make their appearances, and it is obvious that their relationship

is strained. Oberon enlists the help of the plucky trickster, Puck (Eve Cole) to put a love spell on the humans to make things more interesting. However, he goes the extra mile for the poor, unsuspecting Nick Bottom (George Smith), a foolish actor from town, by turning him into a half-man-half-donkey. Folks were especially responsive to Nick Bottom making an ass of himself during his not-so-heartbreaking performance of *Heartbreak Hotel*, in which he laments over having been turned into such a wretched creature. And for folks that are curious, yes he did a donkey voice for the entire song and yes the audience went absolutely wild the whole time.

Another strong component of the show was the plucky group playing the disgruntled actors looking to put on a show for the mighty Duke (Jack Cheyne). Much like how some may consider John, Paul, George, and Ringo to be the Beatles of their time, I would consider Emma Murray, Meg Courney, George Smith, Julia Parr and Nat Morris to be the Beatles of their own. Their rousing rendition of *Twist and Shout* had the audience cheering and singing along. I know personally, I felt very satisfied and happy for their characters, the mechanicals, who had put on a (mostly) successful performance in front of the Duke.

The show finished off very strong with a performance by the fairies to *Dancing in the Moonlight*. Grace McCarthy, Sofia Totino, Bao Vuong, and Alex Hajos all performed wonderfully alongside King Oberon and Queen Titania as their fairy servants and background dancers. Clad in all white, they delivered a dance number straight out of a New Kids on the Block concert. Seriously, someone get these people to Fenway Park.

There was a standing ovation before the last number even finished, and when bows began, the room erupted in cheering and excited chatter. I can absolutely say for certain that *Dreame: A Pop Musical Version of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream"* was a rousing success.

I'm looking forward to whatever Colleges of the Fenway Theater have planned next; great job to everyone involved!



Illustration Sophia Dedek



We will **SEE** you next year...



# COF Does Shakespeare: A Rockin' Review



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